REMARKS

In the Office Action dated September 22, 2008, the Examiner is requiring restriction between the following groups of claims:

Group I: Claims 8 and 9, drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is a mediator which causes release of cell attachment points of the cells from its extracellular matrix.

Group II: Claims 10 and 11, drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is a ligand that modulates attachment and tensional relaxation of the cells.

Group III: Claim 12 drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is hyaluronic acid which reduces extracellular matrix remodeling.

Group IV: Claims 13 and 14, drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is a cytokine which adjusts the intrinsic strain of cells by modulating gene expression.

Group V: Claim 15, drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to

the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is a compound that interferes with actin polymerization to decrease the modulus of the cells and thus decreases its intrinsic strain.

Group VI: Claim 16, drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is nocodazole which disrupts the microtubular network and thus increases cell modulus.

Group VII: Claims 17 and 18, drawn to a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells in order to modulate extracellular matrix synthesis, secretion, stiffness, organization and/or remodeling, or attachment of the cells to the matrix via integrins or other like cell-matrix attachments, wherein the compound is an interfering RNA compound to cytoskeletal genes that regulates the intrinsic setpoint of cells.

In addition, the Examiner has issued a species restriction and requires the election of a specific type of compound for Groups I, II, IV and V. The Examiner is requiring election of one species as listed below:

Group I: If Group I is elected, one of the binding site peptides listed in claim 9 must be elected.

Group II: If Group II is elected, one of the ligands listed in claim 11 must be elected.

Group IV: If Group IV is elected, one of the cytokines listed in claim 14 must be elected.

Group V: If Group V is elected, one of the compounds which interferes with actin polymerization listed in claim 15 must be elected.

In response to the Restriction Requirement, Applicants hereby elect Group IV, claims 13-14, and the species of interleukin-1 beta (IL-1β) with traverse.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's restriction requirement. A

requirement for restriction is only proper when a serious burden is placed on the Examiner. Applicants submit that a search and examination of all claims may be made without imposing a serious burden on the Examiner. Conducting a search on the subject matter of Groups I-VII would not unduly burden the Examiner because the subject matter of these groups is relatively similar and that a search in one group would necessarily include a search of the second. A search relating to one of the Groups would necessarily lead to references relevant to the remaining Groups because each Group is drawn to a similar method, *i.e.*, a method for manipulating the intrinsic strain of cells, comprising treating the cells with compounds that affect the intrinsic strain setpoint of the cells.

Accordingly, the restriction requirement will serve no purpose other than to unfairly and improperly require Applicants to pay duplicative PTO fees to obtain patent protection for their invention.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's recognition that claims 1-7 link Groups I-VII and that upon allowance of claims 1-7, the restriction requirement as to Groups I-VII will be withdrawn and all Groups will be entitled to examination. Thus, Applicants make the present election with the understanding that claims 1-7, 13 and 14 will be examined.

Applicants expressly reserve the right to file one or more divisional patent applications on any of the non-elected groups or species as identified in the Office Action.

Examination of pending claims 1-18 is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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